



November 30, 2017

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The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman, Senate Appropriations
Committee
S128 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman, House Appropriations
Committee
H305 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Cochran and Frelinghuysen:

On behalf of the 114 national education organizations and institutions who are members of the Committee for Education Funding (CEF), we urge you to support increased investments in education by passing a budget deal that eliminates the sequester-level non-defense discretionary (NDD) caps and by increasing the 302(b) allocation for the Labor-Health and Human Services-Education Subcommittee bill by at least its proportional share of the additional spending. As demonstrated by the fiscal year 2018 bills put forward in both chambers, vital education programs will be cut unless Congress increases the NDD cap and provides a large increase in the allocation for the Labor-HHS-Education bill.

CEF, the nation's oldest and largest education coalition, is a non-partisan organization reflecting the continuum of the education community, from early learning to postgraduate education to adult education and education enhancements. CEF advocates on behalf of increasing federal investments in education because they are vital to building a stronger nation, spurring economic growth, and creating a well-educated populace ready to succeed in the global environment. CEF's "5¢ Makes Sense" campaign demonstrates the need to increase education investments from the current two percent of the federal budget to five cents on the federal dollar, providing evidence behind the effectiveness of investing along the entire education continuum. As you know, funding for the Department of Education discretionary programs is still below what it was seven years ago, excluding the Pell Grant program. These cuts to education investments are due in part to the constraints of the austerity level discretionary spending caps in place since sequestration went into effect.

1800 M Street NW, 500 South Tower, Washington, DC 20036
(202) 327-8125

www.cef.org Twitter and Instagram: @edfunding

When Congress last increased the spending caps, the allocation for the Labor-HHS-Education bill went up by less than 4 percent even though it accounts for one third of all NDD spending. We urge you to ensure that the fiscal year 2018 bill's education and workforce training programs will be adequately funded and not subject to cuts as you negotiate a budget deal and then allocate any increased funding.

Individual success and the nation's economic strength are inextricably linked to educational attainment. Students and schools count on strong federal education investments to ensure equitable access to high-quality education in preschool, higher education, and career, technical, and adult education. These investments fill gaps where local and state funding is insufficient or where new needs arise. We encourage you to support a budget deal that maintains the long-standing principle of parity by matching any increase in the defense caps with equal increases in the NDD caps, and then ensure that the fiscal year 2018 Labor-HHS-Education bill receives at least a proportional share of any NDD increase. These actions are necessary to provide greater and necessary investments in education.

Sincerely,



Jocelyn Bissonnette
President



Sheryl Cohen
Executive Director

cc:

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Nita Lowey, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Roy Blunt, Chairman, Senate Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee
The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member, Senate Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee
The Honorable Tom Cole, Chairman, House Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member, House Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Senate Majority Leader
The Honorable Charles Schumer, Senate Minority Leader
The Honorable Paul Ryan, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, House Democratic Leader